

REMARKS

Claims 19-27 are pending and under consideration. Reconsideration is requested based on the following remarks.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102:

Claims 19-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,677,976 to Parker et al. (hereinafter "Parker '976"). The rejection is traversed. Reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

The subject application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 to Japanese Patent Application No. 2001-261282, which was filed August 30, 2001.

Parker '976, on the other hand, is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Application Serial No. 10/033,813, filed January 3, 2002, which was a continuation-in-part of prior U.S. Application Serial No. 09/978,616, filed October 16, 2001. Thus, even if prior U.S. Applications Serial No. 10/033,813 and 09/978,616 were presumed to support the entire disclosure of Parker '976, which they do not, Parker '976 would still be entitled only to a priority date of October 16, 2001. The subject application thus pre-dates Parker '976, and Parker '976 is submitted to be not a valid reference against the subject application.

Parker '976, moreover, which was used in the rejection, is not supported by significant portions of the disclosures of U.S. Applications Serial No. 10/033,813 and 09/978,616. U.S. Application Serial No. 09/978,616, which is now U.S. Patent No. 6,545,697 (hereinafter Parker '697), for example, from which Parker '976 claims priority, lacks significant portions of the subject matter of Parker '976. Thus, Parker '976 is not even entitled to the priority date of October 16, 2001.

Parker '697, for example, did not include the Fig. 1 shown in Parker '976, to which the Office Action refers in section 2, at page 3. The Fig. 1 shown in Parker '976, to which the Office Action refers, rather, and the elements shown therein, was added later.

Column 4, lines 28-35, column 5, lines 15-41, and column 6, lines 31-55 of Parker '976, to which the Office Action also refers in section 2, at page 3, appear to have been added later as well. Parker '976, in fact, contrasts the invention described at column 4, lines 28-35 et seq., with the prior, co-pending applications beginning at column 4, lines 59-67, continuing at column 5, lines 1-14. Claims 19-27 are thus not anticipated by Parker '976. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 19-23 is also earnestly solicited.

Conclusion:

Accordingly, in view of the reasons given above, it is submitted that all of claims 19-27 are allowable over the cited references. Allowance of all claims 19-27 and of this entire application is therefore respectfully requested.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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